

## APPENDIX C

### NATIONAL HISTORY OF JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSES TO DECLINING PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

As part of the National Courts and Community Advisory Committee project, a survey was conducted to determine the nature and degree of community outreach activities currently under way in the courts nationwide. The responses of 45 states and the District of Columbia to this survey demonstrated a significant increase in the nature and extent of the court community involvement activities since the previous national survey in 1984. The types of court programs identified in this survey included:

- Courthouse tours
- Teen courts
- Citizen guides
- Public information telephone hotlines
- Speakers bureaus and *Meet Your Judges* programs
- Computer information facilities
- School outreach efforts
- Divorce workshops
- Media outreach efforts
- Day-care facilities
- Citizen advisory committees
- Public service announcements
- Public opinion surveys and exit surveys
- Judicial performance evaluation programs
- Volunteer programs
- Juror education materials
- Court-watching groups

The national advisory committee identified several essential elements that help courts build their own successful community involvement and constituency-building programs. These elements include suggestions to:

- Proceed carefully in defining the public's role and the manner in which it is played. Volunteers, including those serving on court-appointed advisory committees or commissions, appreciate being treated as paid professionals and being held to serious expectations.
- Review the defined role and all related requirements with everyone involved and explain the purpose behind the public's participation.
- Expect the unexpected. Members of the public will raise issues you have not considered, and every question or issue requires and deserves a response.
- Allow for staff support and for the necessary time (a minimum of two years) in order for the process to develop effectively.
- Develop a representative group by assessing the demographics of the community, including age, gender, disabilities, ethnic/racial groups, language,

religion, economic status, and geographic differences, and then *actively recruit* participants.